The Hutchinson Homestead located along Highway 50 follows a century-old route that went through the area. The historic site was first settled by Joseph S. Hutchinson in 1874.

The homestead was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. In 1986, the homestead was also recognized as a Colorado Centennial Farm.

The rehabilitation of the homestead began in 2002 when Dr. Wendell Hutchinson donated the property to the Town of Poncha Springs to preserve the site.

In 2002 Salida Area Parks Open Space and Trails (SPOT) was awarded a Historic Structure Assessment (HSA) from the State Historical Fund (SHF) to determine the current condition and top priorities to rehabilitate the structures on the site. Following the completion of the HSA the homestead was listed as one of Colorado’s Most Endangered places in 2003. That same year SPOT was also awarded an SHF mini-grant for design documents for the rehabilitation work.

From 2005-2010 SPOT was awarded three SHF grants along with grants from Save America’s Treasures and the National Park Service. These grants funded interior and exterior rehabilitation work on the main house, all ten outbuildings, and site work including such things as the creation of accessible pathways and the restoration of fences, corrals and gates. Due to damage from a wind storm in 2011 there was an SHF emergency grant awarded to SPOT for the emergency stabilization of the loafing shed.

While all of this rehabilitation work was being completed, SPOT also built a new visitor center with other grants and in-kind donations. By June of 2013 with all of the rehabilitation work completed The Hutchinson Homestead and Learning Center opened to the public.

That same year SPOT was also awarded an SHF Education grant for the development of an interpretive plan that included the creation of media based on the homestead’s history, high altitude ranching, and the preservation of the site. Media created included such things as interpretive panels and signage, video, brochures, tour exhibits, and websites.

In 2015 SPOT partnered with Guidestone Colorado, a Colorado non-profit that works on growing a vibrant agricultural future through education, community building, and partnerships. Guidestone Colorado applied for an Education grant for curriculum development for the homestead in the spring grant round and was declined funding.

Later that year after working with SHF staff Guidestone Colorado reapplied in the fall grant round and were awarded funding. The K-12 curriculum developed was grounded in the historic preservation and historical themes represented by the homestead. The curriculum also provided associated teachers professional development. Included in the curriculum were lesson plans designed to augment on-site existing field-trip programs and pilot pre- and post- field trip curriculum extension programs.
OUTCOMES

The fully rehabilitated Hutchinson Homestead site is now used as a learning center. The learning center informs the public, through educational media and curriculum, about the history of the homestead itself, the history of high-altitude ranching, and the preservation work that has been done to preserve the site.

PARTNERS

*The partners listed above are the major partners involved in the project. The project spanned 12 years and many additional partners, volunteers and individual donors were involved.

To see more information about additional partners go to www.hutchinsonhomestead.org

Questions?
Go to www.historycolorado.org/shf-outreach-materials or call us at 303-866-2825.